

HOOD CANAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

America's Unique Heritage

P. O. BOX 87 SEABECK, WASHINGTON 98380

January 31, 2012

Puget Sound Partnership
326 E. D Street
Tacoma, WA 98421

Re: Draft Update: Puget Sound Action Agenda
Hood Canal Area

Attn: Puget Sound Partnership Administrator:

The Hood Canal Environmental Council (HCEC) has worked to protect the Hood Canal watershed's environmental health since 1969. During this time, our members and others have been involved in numerous planning efforts, always working toward the goals of protection and restoration of water quality and related natural resources. HCEC members and others have followed the development of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) for the Hood Canal area with particular interest. We are generally supportive of the list of strategies and actions spelled out in the Action Agenda in Hood Canal. We believe that the continued IWMP process currently represents the greatest chance of accomplishing our goals for this watershed.

As the Local Integrating Organization for the Hood Canal Action Area, the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) deserves credit for guiding the IWMP planning process. The HCCC and its effective partnerships have worked hard through this process to develop a comprehensive list of strategies and actions listed in the Hood Canal profile section of the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) draft update document. In particular, the HCEC supports the following actions:

- * Implement and enforce existing regulatory programs of the counties (SMP, CAO, Comprehensive Plans, etc.) and states (RCW's and WAC's). Adequate funding here will be critical. Mason County recently received grant money for compliance and enforcement activities for existing laws and regulations. This action assists in the implementation of several WRIA 16 Planning Unit recommendations outlined in its WMP.
- * Permanently protect larger tracts of forests for their forest (ecological and community) values. HCEC is actively involved in the Great Kitsap Forest and Bay Project in seeking to conserve as much as 7,000 acres of forestland and 2 miles of Port Gamble Bay shoreline in North Kitsap County. Raising the needed funds to buy the land will take considerable support and involvement of public agencies and private organizations. We hope we can count on support from HCCC and PSP in this effort.
- * Hold Hood Canal climate change symposium to develop, refine and prioritize strategies. We are pleased to see the HCCC taking a proactive approach to the challenges of climate change. The HCEC has reviewed Jefferson County's Final Draft Climate Change Plan and is encouraging Kitsap and Mason Counties to develop similar plans.
- * Work with WRIA planning units to implement priority actions: surface/groundwater monitoring plan; stream aggradation/degradation mitigation; phases II and III of water demand, supply and availability study; and

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outreach/education about water quantity/quality. As you know, funding for WRIA groups will expire in June of this year. WRIA members and others maintain that active watershed planning is very important to overall watershed management, allowing for local prioritization of issues and collaboration among state, tribal and local governments and citizens to address watershed needs and opportunities. Without assistance from the planning units, the HCCC must look for other means of garnering local support needed to implement and monitor some of the actions in the IWMP. Again, we hope we can count on HCCC and PSP support for continuing the work of local WRIAs.

HCEC generally approves the initial list of strategies and actions to alleviate pressures on Hood Canal's resources. However, while they have been identified, they have not been prioritized or refined. The public still needs to know how the actions will be implemented, who the responsible parties are, what it will cost, and how we measure success. We understand that HCCC is continuing to prioritize and further define the strategies and actions. We look forward to participating in the process.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the Hood Canal portion of the Draft Update of the PSP Action Agenda. We remain cautiously optimistic that, when finalized, the Integrated Watershed Management Plan for Hood Canal will succeed where past efforts have often failed, in protecting our watershed's natural resources for future generations.

Sincerely,



William H. Matchett
President, HCEC

dms

copy: Hood Canal Coordinating Council